



United States Department of Agriculture

# Forest Fast Facts

## CHATTACHOOCHEE-OCONEE NATIONAL FORESTS 2015-2016

The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests (Forests) provide the finest outdoor recreation opportunities and natural resources in Georgia. Featuring over 867,000 acres across 26 counties, thousands of miles of clear-running streams and rivers, approximately 850 miles of recreation trails, and dozens of campgrounds, picnic areas, and other recreation activity opportunities, these lands are rich in natural scenery, history and culture.



*Nature viewing was the second most popular visitor use of the Forests in 2015.*

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. Gifford Pinchot, first Chief of the Forest Service, summed up the mission of the Forest Service: "to provide the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people in the long run."

# 867,510

Acres of national forest in  
Georgia



# 26

Number of  
counties in  
Georgia with  
national forest  
lands



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*A volunteer working to treat and save Hemlock trees.*

### Volunteers

Approximately 90 percent of volunteer work is related to trails and recreation programs. 25,000 volunteer hours, worth more than \$570,000.00<sup>1</sup>, are donated on the Forests each year on average.

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## 2.9 million

Number of visitors to the Forests in 2015<sup>2</sup>

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### Recreation and Roads

There are 33 campgrounds, 28 day use areas, six swim beaches, two visitor centers, five shooting ranges and seven overlooks on the Forests. There are 1,272 miles (88 percent) of roads available for public use on the Forests.



*Brasstown Bald is the highest point in Georgia at 4,784 feet.*

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### Wilderness Areas

The Cohutta Wilderness is the largest national forest wilderness east of the Mississippi River. There are 117,837 acres of wilderness on the Forests in Georgia.



*Hiking was the most popular visitor use of the Forests in 2015.*

### Trails

Forest trails are designated for: hiking (850 miles); equestrian (248 miles), mountain biking (191 miles) and OHV (112 miles). Some trails may be designated for multiple uses.

The longest hiking-only footpath (2,190 miles) in the world has its southern terminus at the summit of Springer Mountain. In Georgia, the Appalachian Trail spans more than 78 miles and crosses through five Wilderness areas.

## 850

Miles of trails on the Forests



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**4,784** feet is the highest point in Georgia at Brasstown Bald on the Chattahoochee National Forest.



**300** feet above sea level is the lowest point, located on the Oconee National Forest.

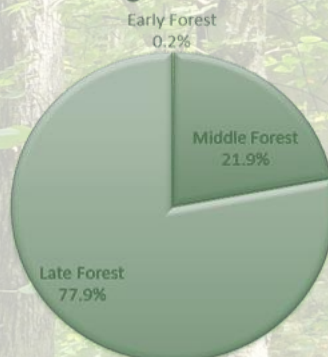
#### Economic Effects

The Forests contributes to more than 500 jobs in recreation in local communities. Across Georgia, outdoor recreation generates \$1.4 billion in state and local tax revenue, \$7 billion in wages and salaries and \$23.3 billion in consumer spending.

#### Forest Health

Top forest health concerns include oak decline, lack of young forest and non-native tree diseases. The Gypsy Moth and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid are major pests.

#### Forest Age Distribution



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#### Threatened and Endangered Species

On the Forests, there are eight plants, three birds, three mammals (bats), five fish, six mussels, one snail, and one amphibian (turtle) listed under the Threatened and Endangered Species Act of 1973.



*Blueside darter fish are found in the Tennessee River drainage.*

#### Soil and Water

There are 3,156 miles of perennial streams across the Forests. Nearly 75 miles of streams are listed as impaired or threatened under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. There are also 80 different soil types on the Forests.

## 6.1 million

Number of people who receive their drinking waters from the Chattahoochee National Forest



*The Smooth Purple Coneflower is listed as an endangered species.*



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### Wildland Fire

After many years of fire exclusion, an ecosystem that needs periodic fire becomes unhealthy. Trees are stressed by overcrowding; fire-dependent species disappear; and flammable fuels build up and become hazardous. However, the right fire at the right place at the right time helps maintain healthy forests, communities and watersheds.

**97%**

of all wildland fires on the Forests are human caused

In 2015, fire managers successfully treated 34,547 acres on the Forests through prescribed fire. Over the last 10 years, an average of 29,312 acres have been treated through prescribed fire per year.



*Over the last ten years, an average of 1,165 acres of wildland fire have been suppressed per year.*

### Acres by County

Banks 650; Catoosa 6; Chattooga 19,390; Dawson 6,760 ; Fan- nin 106,130; Floyd 6,620; Gilmer 55,174; Gordon 8,076; Ha- bersham 39,874; Lumpkin 56,982; Murray 51,696 ; Rabun 148,606; Stephens 23,304; Towns 57,538; Union 97,839; Walk- er 18,844; White 41,533; Whitfield 11,719; Greene 26,659; Jasper 30,312; Jones 17,130; Morgan 308; Oconee 157 ; Ogle- thorpe 3,762; Putnam 38,047; Monroe 251

### Heritage and Archeology

While the Forests will turn 80 years old in 2016, thousands of recorded archeological sites span more than 10,000 years of human history in Georgia.

**4,000+**

Number of recorded  
archeology  
sites on the Forests

### Thinning and Timber

Over the past five years an average of 36,502 CCF (hundred cubic feet) of timber has been sustainably thinned from the Forests.



*Thinning helps maintain healthy forests and watersheds.*



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### Information Sources

Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Forest Service databases and documents.

1. [www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time)
2. [www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/)
3. [water.epa.gov](http://water.epa.gov)
4. [www.fws.gov/endangered/](http://www.fws.gov/endangered/)
5. [www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/gtr/gtr\\_srs197/gtr\\_srs197.pdf](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/gtr/gtr_srs197/gtr_srs197.pdf)
6. [www.fs.fed.us/emc/economics/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/economics/index.shtml)
7. [outdoorindustry.org/images/ore\\_reports/GA-georgia-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf](http://outdoorindustry.org/images/ore_reports/GA-georgia-outdoorrecreationeconomy-oia.pdf)

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